

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Wenger Manufacturing Inc.

Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center

Wenger Manufacturing Inc. Achieves Sales Increase with MAMTC Innovation Project

Client Profile:

Wenger Manufacturing Inc. manufactures state-of-the-art commercial extrusion systems ranging in size from small laboratory and research usage to large production applications. Its fourteen different extruder models are used primarily in the pet food, commercial aquatic feed and human food markets. Wenger also manufactures industrial mixers for blending food and feed recipes, as well as ancillary equipment like flaking rolls and enrobers, which are used to apply seasonings or sugar to snacks, cereals and other foods. The company employs 180 people at its Sabetha, Kansas facility and exports approximately 75 percent of its products.

Situation:

In the past, Wenger's efforts to develop new products and services primarily were a reaction to market challenges clients were experiencing in the field. With an ever-evolving marketplace in which challenges shift on a daily basis, research and development initiatives were a constantly moving target. That's when the company decided to approach the Mid-America Manufacturing Technology Center (MAMTC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

MAMTC led Wenger employees through Eureka! Jump Start, a think tank project to develop new products, services or processes. As a result of the Eureka! Jump Start process, Wenger developed a new leasing system for its extruders. Previously, purchasing a Wenger extruder was sometimes cost-prohibitive for smaller manufacturers in less-industrialized countries. The leasing system gives these companies access to best-in-class equipment at a much lower initial investment while opening up a new source of income for Wenger. In addition to the new leasing system, Wenger has used Eureka! Jump Start to develop a financing package that helped the company secure an \$800,000 order, as well as a third brand of equipment targeted at a segment of the overseas market.

Results:

- * Increased sales by \$2 million.
- * Retained \$2 million in sales
- * Increased capital investments by \$68,000.
- * Secured new contract of \$800,000.

Testimonial:

"MAMTC and Eureka! Jump Start provide valuable tools that really maximize our profits and keep our innovation process on track. The thing I like best about MAMTC is they have a broad focus of topics -- we've used them for everything from energy management and employee training to Lean Manufacturing initiatives and innovation development."

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Laif Bailey, Vice President